

FAITH • FAMILY
COMMUNITY



**POLISH
HERITAGE
CENTER USA**
PANNA MARIA, TEXAS

Visitor Experience #61

THE POLES AND THE RISE OF TEXAS!



Texas
Independence
Day:
March 2,
1836

Graphic image from: www.Polish-Texans.com

Archives and Library Update!

By Lauren Robinson

I am delighted to provide an update on the status of the Library and Archives at the Polish Heritage Center. Much progress has been made in the past year! Currently we are awaiting the installation of metal archival shelving in the archive space. These shelves will house several significant



Interior view of the back corner wall of the Archive Room that will soon have its shelving for storage installed

Photograph courtesy of: Lauren Robinson

items

in-

cluding precious documents and artifacts. The space will provide materials with a safe home in an environment-controlled setting complete with flame suppressors.



Interior view of the front wall of the Archive Room that will have archival quality shelves installed

Photograph courtesy of:
Lauren Robinson

The library has taken shape and now houses a three computer research station complete with Microsoft Office and Ancestry.com for visitors to conduct family ancestry and additional research over Poland, Texas Polonia, and American Polonia. We are very excited about the wonderful



A growing collection of books have been catalogued for research use in our Library Room.

Photograph courtesy of: Lauren Robinson

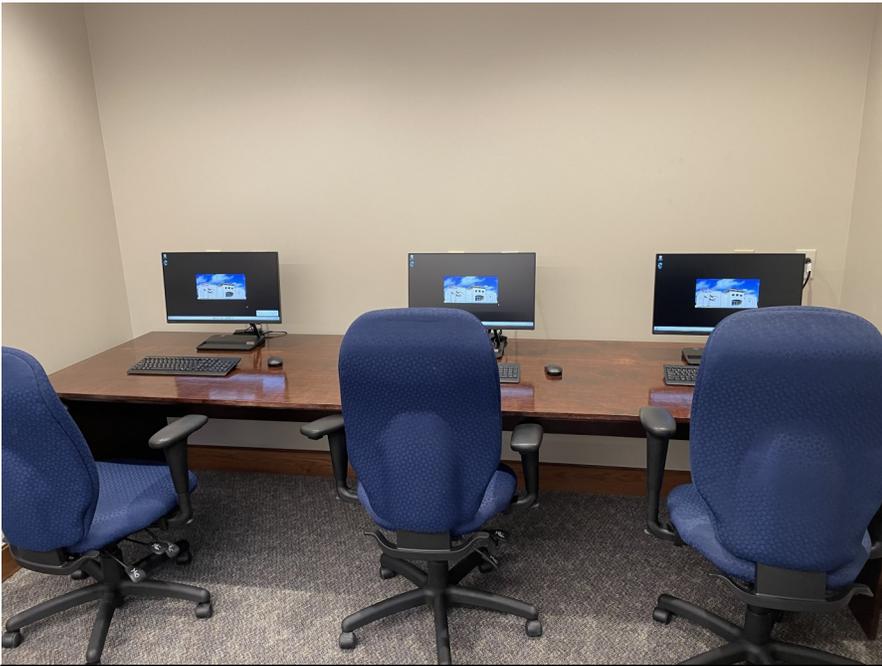


Spacious bookshelves can hold additional books for use by patrons in our comfortable Library Room.

Photograph courtesy of: Lauren Robinson

donations of books we have received! We have even had the amazing pleasure of acquiring **Mr. Jay Orbik's** collection of hundreds of books that he drove across the country from Illinois in a U-Haul to deliver to us!

There is still empty shelving in the library; additional donations would be most welcome and appreciated. The topics of books range across a wide spectrum of Polish history, literature, culture, language, Texas and American Polonia, and books written in Polish. We also have a reference section complete with additional resources for those wishing to learn more about genealogy and how to search.



A view of all three computer stations that will be available for family history and genealogical research

Photograph courtesy of: Lauren Robinson

So many visitors and others interested in their family histories have reached out to us eager to share and see their relatives. Currently we are discussing this amazing project and plan to resume scanning family photographs and documents as soon as possible! We continue to thank you for your support and are eager to help share the

incredible stories of families and descendants.

If you have any questions please contact me at: laurenr@polishheritagecentertx.org or 830-310-8612!

Have a wonderful day,
Lauren Robinson
Librarian/Archivist
Polish Heritage Center
Panna Maria, Texas



Near the computers is a map of Upper Silesia beside a list of ancestral villages researched by the Silesian Profiles Committee.

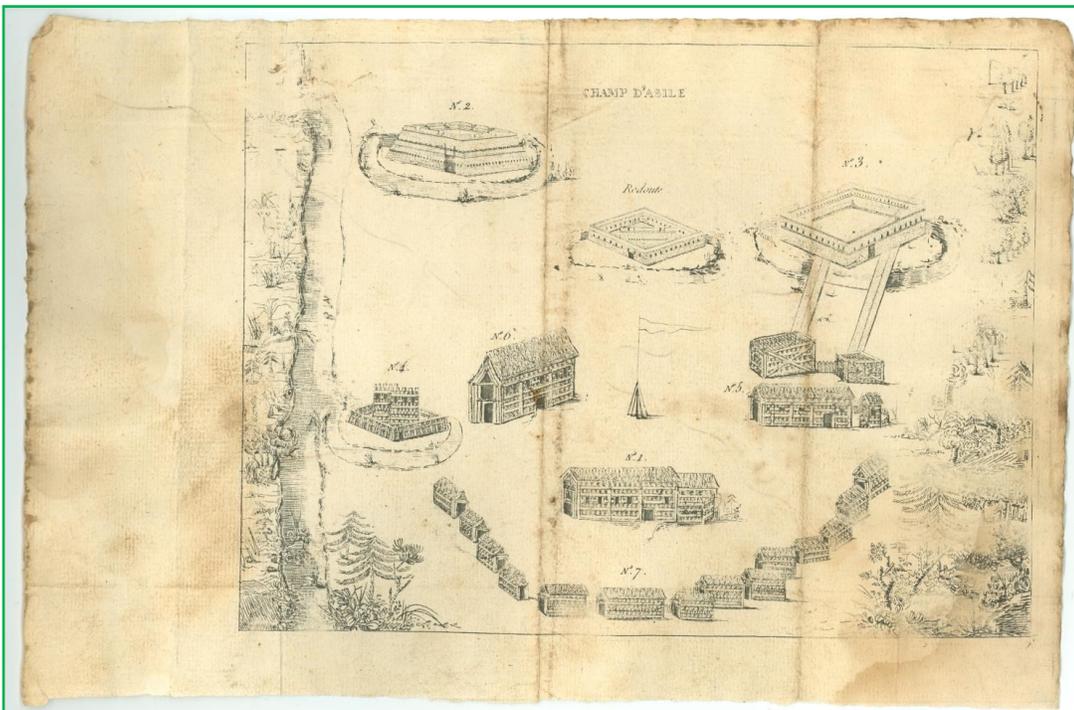
Photograph courtesy of:
Lauren Robinson

Polish Texas History and Immigrations [Abridged, covering up to circa 1836]

By Professor Jim Mazurkiewicz

The first and second largest groups of Polish immigrants were the Silesian Poles of South Texas (Panna Maria - 1854) and the Wielkopolska/Kujawy Poles of the Brazos Valley/Central Texas (1867). These two groups came “**za chlebem**” or “**for bread.**” During that time, Poland did not exist on the political map of Europe.

However, the first Poles to arrive in 1818 to Texas were members of the



predominately French group that sought refuge at Champ D'Asile (Field of Asylum) near Liberty, Texas (East Texas). One of the artillerymen who had served with **Napoleon** in this group was **Constantin Malczewski**. Also, three other Poles, **Skierdo**, **Salanav**

"Champ D'Asile", image, Date Unknown; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph31613/>: accessed February 26, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Star of the Republic Museum.

and **Boril** helped in this short lived enterprise. After its collapse, **Malczewski** immigrated to Mexico where he became a general of artillery in the Mexican Army from 1834 to 1837. In less than a year after the settlement was founded, the Champ D'Asile colonists fled to New Orleans as supplies ran out and the Spanish military was moving up from Mexico to disperse them.

In 1821, **Captain Joseph Alexander Czyczeryn**, probably a Louisiana resident, joined **Dr. James Long's** second filibustering expedition to Spanish Texas. Before the Spanish captured these invaders, **Czyczeryn** fled to the United States.

During the 1830-1831 unsuccessful uprising against the Russian rulers in Warsaw, Polish efforts failed, and the limited independence ended. All segments of Polish society, military and civilian, were assimilated into Russian institutions. The same pressures were also occurring in the Prussian sector of Poland, where the government was encouraging ethnic Germans to move into the Polish territories, and the Prussian government was not opposed to the Poles moving out from their land.

Poles began coming singly or in small groups before and after the 1830



Simon Wiess

Image from: tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/wiess-simon

Warsaw uprising to Texas and these for the most part were absorbed into the communities where they settled. There were 235 refugees that immigrated to the US during this time, and 43 came to Texas. Austria, Prussia and France offered refuge for a while, but only France allowed them to remain; Austria and Prussia deported them to the United States where they were welcomed as “freedom fighters.” When the Texas revolution broke out in 1835, many volunteered to win glory in the only vocation they knew. Those hiding in Austria were

wanted by the Russians for execution.

Simon Wiess was one of the Poles in Texas during the 1830s; he was living in Galveston by 1833 and served as a collector of customs under the governments of both Mexico and the Republic of Texas. These Poles soon found themselves caught up in the simmering Texas Revolution. **Michael Debicki**, an engineer, served at Goliad. Others serving with **Colonel James Fannin** in Goliad were **Francis** and **Adolph Petruszewicz**, **John Kornicky** and **Joseph Schrusnecki**; all were killed. In addition, **Felix Wardzinski**, **Michael Dembinski** and **Frederick Lemsky** plus 6 additional Poles served at the Battle of San Jacinto with **General Sam Houston** on March 21, 1836.



Illustration of
Lt. Col. Felix Wardzinski
*pactx.org/wp-content/
uploads/2020/10/Wardzinski-Felix-
Andrew.pdf*

Andrzej Felix Wardzinski helped with both the strategic plan for the surprise attack at the battle of San Jacinto and the believed involvement in the capture of **General Santa Anna**. One hundred years later, on June 6, 1936, **Lt. Col. Felix Wardzinski** was listed in the Texas Hall of Fame alongside **Sam Houston**, Liberator and First President of the Republic of Texas, and **Stephen F. Austin** Colonizer and Father of the Lone Star Empire.

San Jacinto Monument is a National Historic Landmark on the location of the battlefield for Texas Independence against Mexico. On this location on April 21, 1836, the Army of Texas Commanded by **General Sam Houston** made famous the battle cry, “Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad! The Texans charged and won the battle. The battlefield is named after the San Jacinto River that flows

through this area. The San Jacinto River was named by the Spanish explorers in the late 17th century, and it was named after the newly canonized Dominican Silesian Polish Saint, Św. Jacek or San Jacinto in Spanish.

When Austin, Texas, was laid out in 1839, Virginia-born **William Sandusky** helped to survey and prepare a map of the fledgling Texas Capital. **William Sandusky**



Grave stone of William Sandusky
Photo added by Floyd Lanny Martin *Photograph from:*
findagrave.com/memorial/126378697/william-harrison-sandusky

is of Polish heritage with his lineage tracing back to **Antoni Sadowski** who came to the British Colony during the time of **Queen Anne** who reigned in Britain from 1707—1714. During this time, **William Sandusky** was an artist and draftsman in the General Land Office and later became the agency registrar. In 1840, he became Secretary to Texas President **Mirabeau B. Lamar** and later moved to Galveston to survey the coast and harbors of Texas.

References:
“The Texians and the Texans” The Polish Texans by James Patrick McGuire
The Polish Genealogical Society of Texas
USTA Institute of Texan Cultures – Texas One and All
“Eighteen Minutes” The Battle of San Jacinto & the Texas Independence Campaign by Stephen L. Moore
T.T.T. “Gone to Texas” Anglo Colonization of Texas
The Polish Texans by T. Lindsay Baker
Travel Notes by Stefan Nestorowicz (1909)
Polish Ethno-religion of East Texas: The Case of St. Joseph’s Parish, 1866-1900 by James S. Olsen
<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1904&context=ethj>

Famous Poles in America

On the state-wide level here in Texas is the former head coach of the Houston Texans, **Gary Kubiak**. Hailing from Houston, Texas, his roots go back to the Polish stronghold of Bremond, Texas. **Gary** grew up cutting his teeth on football beginning at St. Pius X School in Houston. Following graduation from high school, **Gary Kubiak** attended Texas A&M and there played under coaches **Tom Wilson** and the famous **Jackie Sherrill**. **Gary** was first drafted by the Denver Broncos in 1987. He won his first Super Bowl in 1994 as a quarterback coach for the San Francisco 49ers. Afterwards, he earned two more Super Bowl titles as offensive coordinator and quarterback coach for the Denver Broncos. **Gary Kubiak** served as head coach for the Houston Texans from 2006 – 2013. **Gary** once again returned to Denver and there won Super Bowl 50 in 2015 as their head coach. In 2021, **Gary Kubiak** announced his retirement from a successful football career.



Gary Kubiak
From: baltimoresun.com/sports/ravens/bal-sources-gary-kubiak-emerging-as-frontrunner-for-ravens-offensive-coordinator-job-20140127-story.html

On the national stage, television host **Laura Ingraham** is a dynamo! With her beginnings in Glastonbury, Connecticut, her maternal grandparents were of Polish heritage. After earning a B.A. degree from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, she continued at University of Virginia School of Law. After law school, she served in the Reagan administration, worked as a law clerk for Judge **Ralph K. Winter Jr.**, and subsequently clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice **Clarence Thomas!** In 1996, she began a transition to television and radio where she appeared or hosted many different television and radio programs. Her culmination came in 2017 when she began hosting her own show on the Fox News Network, *The Ingraham Angle*.



Laura Ingraham
From: al.com/news/2017/09/laura_ingraham_joins_fox_new_s.html

Calendar of Events

June 24 & 25, 2022 — Polski Dzień in Bremond, Texas

September 4, 2022—Falls City Labor Day Picnic, Falls City, Texas

October 9, 2022—Turkey Dinner & Home Coming, Panna Maria, Texas

November 12, 2022 PACT ANNUAL MEETING,
Annunciation of the BVM Catholic Parish, St. Hedwig, Texas

Historical Highlights

May 3, 1791 - Polish Constitution Day

May 8, 1945 - World War II Ends

May 12, 1364 - Founding of Jagiellonian University

May 18, 1920 - Birth of **Karol Wojtyla** in Wadowice, Poland, named
Pope John Paul II, October 16, 1978

May 28, 1981 - Death of Polish Primate and staunch anti-communist,
Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski

May 29, 2022 - Ascension of the Lord

May 30, 2022 - Memorial Day

June 2, 1979 - First pilgrimage of **Pope John Paul II** to Poland, through June 10

June 12, 1887 - Founding of the Polish Falcons of America, fraternal insurance
benefit society headquartered in Pittsburgh

*Everyone is Invited to Join us for
the Polish Heritage Center's Family Day Program:*

**“Celebrating Armed Forces Day
and Honoring Our Retired and Active Military”**



**Saturday, May 21, 2022
10:00am to 4:00pm**

All Retired and Active Military Personnel will Receive
Complimentary Admission that Day!
(General Admission: \$10 adults & \$5 youth 5-17; free for under 5)

*Join us for the family day program, hands-on activities and educational exhibits!
Retired and Active Military we invite you to come and share your memories and stories!
Everyone please share with your friends, family and community organizations!*



**13909 North FM 81,
Panna Maria, TX 78144**
<https://polishheritagecentertx.org>



The Sacred Memories of Generations;

Let's memorialize our ancestors, we have to preserve our inherit values, share them with new generations of our family, and with pride and thanksgiving, share them with the whole world...To instill pride and knowledge of our Polish heritage, ancestors, and culture for this and future generations.

Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta

Bishop Yanta's quote reflects the many comments we have received from visitors since the Center opened to the public seven months ago. It has been wonderful to see visitors' mixed reactions of joy, surprise, tears, and pride as they saw the orientation movie and walked through the exhibit galleries. The audio wands have proven to be a very popular with visitors of all ages to learn more about Polish heritage. Our young visitors have particularly enjoyed the children's component of the audio wand. One of our young visitors, who was 4 years old, even wanted to take the audio wand home! Our visitors have been appreciative and very impressed that the text on the audio wands is available in English, Polish, and Spanish.

Our visitors have come from around to the world to visit the Center. Last month, two visitors from Poland were on a business trip to San Antonio and visited the Center by uber! We have also been busy giving tours: schools, home-school groups, and community organizations. If your organization or school is interested in having a tour, please contact Angelica at angelicad@polishheritagecentertx.org.

Angelica Dacey



Angelica on far left with a group of visitors in the Center
Photograph from: Polish Heritage Center Facebook page